



**Frederick County
Government
Frederick, Maryland**

News Release

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COMMISSIONERS REPORT ON THE STATE OF FREDERICK COUNTY

FREDERICK, MD – The Frederick Board of County Commissioners today presented a comprehensive report on the [state of the county](#) in commemoration of their one-year anniversary of taking office. The [strategic goals](#) approved at the beginning of their term set the stage for actions by the commissioners in three main areas highlighted in the report: meeting budget and financial challenges, responding to the economy with an emphasis on jobs and [business-friendly initiatives](#), and redefining the role of Frederick County Government.

Board President Blaine Young reflected on the state of the county by saying, “When this board came into office, we were faced with a large budget deficit and very challenging economic conditions in Frederick County. We promised from the start that there would be no more ‘status quo’ and that we would not only balance the budget, but take steps to achieve considerable savings for our taxpayers without sacrificing citizen services.

“We have made difficult decisions over the last year, but we believe the results stand for themselves – a budget where we can live within our means with no tax increases, leaner and more streamlined government operations, collaboration with the business community to ease regulatory burdens during continuing difficult economic times, and maintaining basic government operations. We believe that the tough and careful decisions we have made over the past year have placed the county on solid ground.

“We could not have faced these challenges and achieved such results without the support and hard work of our county manager, our division directors and our dedicated employees. We appreciate them and wish to thank them for their hard work for the citizens of Frederick County. They are taking care of business and doing much more with fewer resources, and the resulting work continues to be exemplary.”

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The complete report on the [state of the county](#) is available on the Board of County Commissioners' webpage at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/bocc. The report includes information on the following topics:

- Demographics, the economy, job creation and jobs lost.
- Budget – The county faced an unprecedented decline in revenue coupled with state budget cuts and shifts to local government.
- Potentially adverse state impacts that may come next year such as the shift of teacher pensions to county government at an estimated cost of \$12 - \$15 million and the prospect of total maximum daily load stormwater management regulations at an estimated cost of \$4 to \$5 billion.
- A comparison of past budgets and a look at the fiscal integrity of Frederick County, which saw an improvement in its bond rating due to the board's commitment to address structural imbalances through expenditure cuts without material reliance on one-time resources.
- Charts that compare taxes by jurisdiction as well as pensions funded.
- Updates on property, income and recordation taxes.
- Reductions in all areas of county government and tough choices such as a continued hiring freeze, reduction in the workforce, the deferral of funding for capital projects and the reorganization of several divisions and departments. The commissioners reorganized the Fire & Rescue Services and the Interagency Information Technologies Divisions. They also consolidated the Planning, Economic Development and Permitting and Development Review Divisions and the Office of Environmental Sustainability into a new division, called the Community Development Division.
- A report on county's exceptional school system – For the third consecutive year, no [Frederick County Public School](#) (FCPS) senior failed to graduate as a result of not meeting Maryland's High School Assessment requirement; FCPS had the state's second highest graduation rate at 91.7 percent and the lowest dropout rate at 5.06 percent; SAT scores continue to surpass state and national scores, and *Newsweek* again listed all nine of the county's high schools on its list of America's Best High Schools for 2011.
- Cooperative efforts with municipalities that resulted in such achievements as a new library, fire station and the resolution of the water system crisis in Brunswick and Rosemont; work with The City of Frederick on the airport hangar, Motter Street Bridge and Carroll Creek Linear Park; improved functioning of the Thurmont Senior Center, and the transition of the Up-County Center due to the loss of state funding.
- Public safety – The crime rate per capita in Frederick County is less than one-half the national average. The [Sheriff's Office](#) is the only agency in Maryland that partners with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and participates in the 287(g) program, which has resulted in 966 detainees lodged on criminal aliens since the program's inception.

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- Public safety – [fire and rescue](#) responded to 32,611 calls in FY 2011 and the county continues to maintain a strong career and volunteer base of dedicated personnel.
- [Parks & Recreation Division](#) maintains 18 developed parks and 2,066 acres of park land, which were enjoyed by over 1.4 million estimated visitors to date in 2011.
- [Frederick County Public Libraries](#) serves 1,947,745 visitors annually, with 5,629 daily average visitors served at eight branch locations -- in spite of reductions in hours and other cutbacks.
- The public meeting schedule for the [Frederick/Carroll County Waste-to-Energy Project](#), cost information, a statement of fiscal responsibility and savings on waste disposal costs.
- Roads and bridges – With 1,271 centerline miles, Frederick County has 219 bridges (over 20 foot span), and road, bridge and highway projects remain a priority for the county.
- [Citizens Care and Rehabilitation Center](#) returned over one million dollars to the county as a result of wage, salary and benefit reductions and realignment. The center and [Montevue Assisted Living](#) are due to move into their new state-of-the-art facility in spring 2012.
- [Public-private partnerships](#) were on the commissioners’ radar from the beginning of the year, and several appointed committees continue to explore and identify cost savings through outsourcing and the creation of public-private partnerships in the delivery of county programs and services.
- [Agricultural Preservation Program](#) - Frederick County has preserved 47,883 agricultural acres and another 16,269 acres on 105 easements through the Installment Purchase Program.
- Business-friendly improvements include: development of 236 [action items](#) with 50 percent completed to date; revisions to the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (roads and schools regulations), Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (fee-in-lieu-of option) and Forest Resource Ordinance (no stricter than state standards) programs; revisions to the application and approval process; reduction in fee schedules; 24 zoning text amendments; building excise tax reduction to zero, and reconsideration of the Countywide Zoning and Land Use Plan designations.

The board concluded the state of the county report with a special presentation prepared by the Interagency Information Technologies Division Video Services team, called “[Taking Care of Business](#).” The production features photos of county employees at work in various jobs, serving citizens in many different capacities. The video is available for viewing under “FCG TV features” on the county’s webcasting page at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/video.

For further information on the state of the county report, contact Ragen Cherney, Office of the County Manager, at 301-600-1049 or via e-mail at rcherney@FrederickCountyMD.gov.